1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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themselves make use of these secondary resources which they find on their land.

We may mention, finally, the various uses to which uncultivated land in the town—streets and open spaces in Bida or the larger villages—is put: women may put up little 'kitchens' by the roadside, where they cook food and sell it to passers-by; traders or craftsmen may build themselves a small hut to be used as workshop or booth; or neighbours may get together and build one of the little mosques on the open space between their houses, which you find scattered all over Bida town. No permission is necessary for these modest buildings. For larger enterprises, a big mosque, or a market, the *Etsu* in Bida or, in the village, the chief, would himself allot the necessary space. This practice includes modern requirements as well: thus *Etsu* Mohamadu, who had shown great sympathy for the work of the C.M.S. Mission, gave them a space for building a school and a compound inside Bida, in his own *ekpā* of the town, free of charge.

LIVE STOCK

Cattle-keeping plays a very secondary part in Nupe economics. This is shown most clearly in the very low *per capita* figures quoted in the statistical table at the end of this section. To-day cattle are owned only by the butchers who buy for the kill from the Bornu and Fulani cattle-traders who, with their huge herds, pass regularly through Nupe and Bida, on their way from the north and the south. I say 'to-day', because formerly many of the members of the Nupe aristocracy and the more wealthy among the Bida people used to own large herds of cattle.[1] Slaves taken from the Bororó-Fulani, the nomadic Fulani herdsmen, looked after the cattle. The cattle were always kept outside the town, frequently a long distance away; for they had to be moved from pasture to pasture according to the season, up north, away from the tsetse-infested area near the rivers, in the rains, and south again in the dry season. This meant, obviously, much trouble and cost, and this is mostly quoted as the reason which made the Nupe eventually abandon cattle-keeping altogether. *U de wahalla*, 'it is a great trouble', was the explanation given to me by the *Alkali* of Bida when I expressed my astonishment that it was so difficult nowadays to find people ready to buy a herd of cattle. I have known two cattle-owners—the last in Nupe; one was an ex-slave who died without heir in 1936 and left a herd of thirty-two head of cattle which at the time was tended for him by Fulani herdsmen who had their camp near Bida. It was at his death that the question arose where to find a buyer for the herd. The other cattle-owner was the late *Etsu* of Agaie, a Fulani by birth, who owned a large herd of very beautiful cattle, of over 200 head, which was tended by Nupe shepherds, the sons of ex-slaves of the *Etsu*.

I may, perhaps, add here an historical note: The cattle of the *Etsu* of Agaie were not, like the cattle to be seen at present in Nupe, of the

[1] Laird and Oldfield refer to the huge herds of cattle which they saw in the capital of Nupe kingdom, Rabá.

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233 178 northern, humped, breed. They were humpless and of small build, evidently related to the dwarf cattle which exist to-day in certain areas in eastern and south-eastern Nigeria. These dwarf cattle are said to have been very widespread in eastern and northern Nupe country before the Fulani conquest; the Gbari, for example, maintain that they had owned, originally, large herds of these cattle which, to-day, have almost disappeared in this region. The traditions of Nupe speak of a magic connected with a bull or a cow with which the ancestor-king Tsoede endowed the first Beni chiefs. The *ketsá* ritual on the Niger river demanded the sacrifice of a bull, to be presented annually by the chief of the Kyedye. Evidently, these rites and sacrifices could only have referred to these dwarf, pre-Fulani cattle. Anyhow, there is no evidence that cattle have ever played any important part in the economy of the peasant areas, and possibly in the whole pre-Fulani kingdom.

233 471 177 The disappearance of cattle, however, from the Fulani-Nupe, and from the households of the rich, demands explanation. No doubt the 'great trouble' has played some part in this change. With the disappearance of slavery the problem of finding suitable and sufficiently cheap labour presented an additional difficulty. But the decision to abandon cattle-keeping was also due to a decided change in the attitude of the people towards this commodity. The herds of cattle were, in a word, capital. The Nupe do not live on the cattle, basing their diet on milk and butter, as the Fulani and other cattle people do. Nor are the cattle in Nupe linked to a whole system of religious beliefs, taboos, and ceremonial usages. The *Etsu* of Agaie (on whose herd I could examine these questions in detail) occasionally sold one or two head of cattle when he was in need of money—this was the only concrete use to which he or any of the Nupe cattle-owners would put their cattle. I cannot judge how far status and prestige may have formerly entered into this assessment of the value of cattle. I gathered that it could not have been of much significance; the possession of horses counted for much more. But the existing incentives to possess cattle must have been further weakened, and even reversed, by two changes in the present-day economic situation. First, by the enormous rise in the price of cattle, especially in the countries south of Nupe, which came with the increased (European and Europeanized) demand for meat and skins. Second, by the appearance of new means of economic enterprise, and the prospects of more profitable, large-scale trade, which necessitated a more liquid form of capital. It is a fact that a large number of rich cattle-owners soon sold their herds, attracted by the high price, and also realizing most probably the greater advantage that, under modern conditions, lay in transforming their stock into ready money.

231 This tendency to keep the capital 'liquid' is shown also in the readiness of the Nupe to experiment with different kinds of live stock. Thus we find here and there—and the same thing is reported from Nupe a hundred years ago—ostriches, which the Nupe buy from traders from the north, feed and tend and finally sell again with a profit. An enterprising chief had even taken to breeding horses; it was done on a very small scale, and was in Nupe an isolated case, but still characteristic of

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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the general trend. The same trend is, finally, evident in the Nupe method of keeping sheep and goats.

Sheep and Goats

Very rarely do the Nupe farmers (or town people for that matter) breed sheep and goats. It is, once more, the principle of 'liquid' resources that counts. A great many farmers buy a sheep or goat when it is young, or when sheep and goats are cheap, and sell it again later on with profit, when they are in need of money. Certain regular fluctuations in the price of goats form the basis for this calculation. During the season of the great Mohammedan feasts, when rams are killed in almost every house, prices go up, to fall again during the rainy season, before the harvest, when there is little money coming in and accordingly little demand for animals.[1] This method of husbandry accounts for the very irregular distribution of sheep and goats at a given time, varying greatly with the individual need for money and the ability or inclination to invest money in animals. The general figures *per capita* of sheep and goats are surprisingly low (see the statistical table). The figure for Bida town is 0·12 and for the districts 0·71 per male adult. These figures reflect the very small money resources the Nupe have for engaging in this sort of seasonal trade. Throughout the year, and especially during the time of the Mohammedan festivals, a large number of sheep and goats have, in fact, to be imported from Hausa. But the figures also show that sheep- and goat-keeping is more frequent in the districts than in Bida. This bears out what I have said above about the influence of varied and expanding economic enterprise upon stock-keeping. Bida, though richer than the districts, is poorer in live stock; the centre of trade and of manifold economic interests keeps its capital more liquid than the country with its limited scope of economic prospects.

It is interesting to note in this connexion that in goat- or sheep-breeding the young animals always belong to the owner of the mother-goat or -sheep; the owner of the female animal may ask the owner of the male animal to let him have the animal for breeding, but this would be done without payment or return of any kind, merely as a personal favour. Female animals are accordingly more expensive than male animals, and the inducement to part with the mother-goat thus often overweighs the interest in the breeding itself.

Other Domestic Animals—

The Nupe keep no pigs and eat no pork—an avoidance which is not, as far as I see, due only to Mohammedan influence. The few pigs one sees in the country belong to Yoruba.

[1] Prices for sheep and goats vary from 5*s.* to 15*s.*, according to the season (see p. 316). The great seasonal changes are also shown in the figures for sheep and goats slaughtered in Bida in the different months of the year: January, 130; February, 150; March, 82; April, 151; May, 129; June, 68; July, 58; August, 114; September, 116; October, 119; November, 120; December, 122. The highest figures refer to January/February and April, the months of the Mohammedan festivals of *Ramadan* and *Muharram*; the lowest figures to June and July, in the middle of the rains, before the first harvest of the season.